Horsham District Council

DELEGATED APPLICATIONS - ASSESSMENT SHEET

APPLICATION NO./ADDRESS:
DC/24/1846
Steyning Grammar School Boarding, Church Street, Steyning, West Sussex,

DESCRIPTION:
Installation of ground mounted Air Source Heat Pumps and Roof Mounted Solar PV Panels on Bennetts House.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

DC/21/1803	Installation of 3 poles	NO OBJECTION to Notification on 02.08.2021

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The application site is located within the Steyning Conservation Area and is accessed from either the east side of Church Street and also the from the south side of Vicarage Lane to the north. Steyning Grammar School is a Boarding campus and the application site is made up of three main buildings, Bennet Building, Bolton House and Wykeham Cottage. Bennet Building opened in the 1970's, it is of brick construction. Bolton House is a newer building that opened in 2010, its construction is brick cavity wall. Wykeham Cottage is constructed with stone solid walls.

To the west of the site are residential properties which front onto Church Street, a number of which are Grade II Listed. School Lane runs along the southern boundary, and to the east is Church Street Public Car Park and Fletchers Croft Play Area.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

Planning permission is sought to install ground mounted Air Source Heat Pumps and Roof Mounted Solar PV Panels on the roof of Bennetts House. Air Source Heat Pumps were initially proposed near to the western boundary of the site, however due to concern of potential impact on neighbouring amenity to the west the plans were amended to relocate the proposed ASHPs (x3) adjacent to the north elevation of Bennett House, and one ASHP northeast of Wykeham House.

The Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) are proposed in order to replace the existing gas heating system to enhance energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

The project includes energy efficiency upgrade to the building's fabric with improved insulation, draught-proofing, and sealing aging windows and doors. These measures aim to enhance thermal performance and reduce energy loss. Additionally, the heating infrastructure will be upgraded with new radiators and fan coil units, ensuring efficient heating throughout the school.

Roof-mounted Solar Photovoltaics (PV) are also proposed to be mounted Bennetts House flat roof (above the current plantroom) and are to offset the increased electricity consumption from the ASHPs. This system aims to generate clean, renewable electricity, reducing the academy's reliance on the grid and supporting its sustainability goals. The solar PV system will power the ASHPs and other electrical systems, to promote energy self-sufficiency.

The applicant has commissioned acoustic noise assessments to be made and mitigation included to assess and reduce the ASHPs impact on neighbouring properties and in addition the location of the ASHPs has also been moved further into the site away from the western boundary. The proposed heat pumps will be mounted on a new concrete base platform to ensure appropriate ventilation and access for maintenance and enclosed in fencing.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Horsham District Planning Framework (2015):
Policy 1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
Policy 3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
Policy 12 - Strategic Policy: Vitality and Viability of Existing Retail Centres
Policy 13 - Town Centre Uses
Policy 24 - Strategic Policy: Environmental Protection
Policy 25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Policy 32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
Policy 33 - Development Principles
Policy 34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
Policy 35 - Strategic Policy: Climate Change
Policy 36 - Strategic Policy: Appropriate Energy Use
Policy 37 - Sustainable Construction
Policy 41 - Parking
Policy 42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities
Policy 43 - Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF requires that all development plans complete their reviews no later than 5 years from their adoption. Horsham District Council is currently in the process of reviewing its development plan however at this stage the emerging policies carry only limited weight in decision making. As the HDPF is now over 5 years old, the most important policies for the determination of this application must be considered as to whether they are 'out of date' (NPPF paragraph 11d). This includes, for applications involving the provision of housing, whether the Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites (NPPF footnote 8).

The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, with the supply currently calculated as being 2.9 years. The presumption in favour of development within Paragraph 11d) of the NPPF therefore applies in the consideration of all applications for housing development within the District (unless footnote 7 or Paragraph 14 applies to relevant applications), with Policies 2, 4, 15 and 26 now carrying only moderate weight in decision making.

All other policies within the HDPF as itemised above have been assessed against the NPPF and are considered to be consistent such that they continue to attract significant weight in decision making.

Horsham District Local Plan (2023-40) (Regulation 19):
Strategic Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Strategic Policy 2: Development Hierarchy
Strategic Policy 6: Climate Change
Strategic Policy 7: Appropriate Energy Use
Strategic Policy 8: Sustainable Design and Construction
Strategic Policy 9: Water Neutrality
Strategic Policy 10: Flooding
Strategic Policy 11: Environmental Protection
Strategic Policy 12: Air Quality
Strategic Policy 13: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
Strategic Policy 19: Development Quality
Strategic Policy 20: Development Principles

Policy 21: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment
Strategic Policy 23: Infrastructure Provision
Strategic Policy 24: Sustainable Transport
Policy 25: Parking
Strategic Policy 27: Inclusive Communities, Health and Wellbeing
Policy 28: Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation
Strategic Policy 29: New Employment
Strategic Policy 30: Enhancing Existing Employment
Strategic Policy 37: Housing Provision
Strategic Policy 38: Meeting Local Housing Needs
Policy 40: Improving Housing Standards in the District

Supplementary Planning Guidance:
Planning Obligations and Affordable Housing SPD (2017)
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (2017)

Steyning Neighbourhood Plan (made):
SNDP2 – Responsible Environmental Design
SNDP3 – Contribution to Character

REPRESENTATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES
Where consultation responses have been summarised, it should be noted that Officers have had consideration of the full comments received, which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk

Consultations:

HDC Conservation: No Objection

HDC Environmental Health: No Objection to the amended plans

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS:

Representations:
Letters of Objection were received from 4 addresses which objected to the originally submitted application which had ASHPs located near the western boundary on the following grounds: Impact on Amenity

Parish Comments:
Steyning Parish Council: No Objection

Member Comments:
None received

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITY:

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a person's rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the same Act, which sets out their rights in respect to private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposal would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles.

The application has also been considered in accordance with Horsham District Council's public sector equality duty, which seeks to prevent unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people in a diverse community, in accordance with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In this case, the proposal is not anticipated to have any potential impact from an equality perspective.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development:

The application site comprises an established residential grammar school. The proposal relates to the installation of three air source heat pumps (ASHP) externally positioned on the North Elevation of Bennett House and one positioned North East of Wykeham House in addition to the installation of solar panels to the roof of Bennett House, that would support and contribute to the vitality and viability of the premises, in addition to improving the site's carbon footprint. It is therefore considered that the proposed works are acceptable in principle, subject to all other material considerations.

Design, Appearance and Heritage:

Policies 25, 32, and 33 of the HDPF promote development that protects, conserves, and enhances the townscape character from inappropriate development. Proposal should consider landscape characteristics, with development seeking to provide an attractive, functional and accessible environment that complements the locally distinctive character of the district. Buildings should contribute to a sense of place, and should be of a scale, massing, and appearance that is of a high standard or design and layout which relates sympathetically to the landscape and built surroundings.

Policy 34 of the HDPF states, inter alia, that the council will sustain and enhance its historic environment through positive management of development affecting heritage assets. Development will not be permitted which would have an adverse impact on the setting or special architectural character or appearance of a listed building.

Policy SNDP2.2 g) of the Steyning Neighbourhood Plan states development proposals should be energy self-sufficient, utilising renewable energy sources wherever possible.

It is considered the proposed air source heat pumps and solar panels are located to be relatively inconspicuous and will not be readily visible in relation to an appreciation of the special interest of the surrounding heritage assets. It is considered that where they are visible they will be understood in relation to the twentieth century school buildings which do not contribute to the character of the conservation area. It is considered that the proposed structures will not harm the character of the conservation area or the setting of the listed buildings in the vicinity.

The positioning of the proposed air conditioning units are inconspicuous locations which would limit the level of harm and visual impact on the character and appearance of nearby historic buildings within Steyning Conservation Area, and would also provide public benefits from the viable use of the building as a school with improved internal environment and would contribute to the vitality and viability of the premises

Residential Amenity:

Policy 33 of the HDPF states that permission will be granted for development that does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of the occupiers/users of nearby properties and land.

The applicant has amended the original proposal to relocate the ASHPs further away from the nearest boundary to the west and have reduced the number to 3x adjacent to the north elevation of the Bennet House and one northeast of Wykeham House. Noise assessments have also been provided. The HDC Environmental Health department has been consulted and it is considered that the installation of ASHP's at the locations shown on the revised plans should not cause any adverse noise impacts to the amenity of adjoining occupiers.

Water Neutrality:

There is no clear or compelling evidence to suggest the nature and scale of the proposed development for private personal use by the occupant family would result in a more intensive occupation of the

dwelling necessitating an increased consumption of water that would result in a significant impact on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. The grant of planning permission would not therefore adversely affect the integrity of these sites or otherwise conflict with policy 31 of the HDPF, NPPF paragraph 193 and the Council's obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) mandates that every development must achieve at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG (unless the development qualifies as exempt under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024) and that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that development must not be begun unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority and the planning authority has approved the Plan.

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must show how the development will achieve the required minimum 10% BNG using the statutory biodiversity metric tool, and must demonstrate how the habitats will be managed and maintained for 30 years, starting from the date the development is completed. Off-site gains and significant on-site enhancements will be secured over this period by way of a Legal Agreement.

The Applicant has demonstrated that the development is exempt from the requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG by reason of:

- The development qualifies as 'de minimis' under Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

Conclusions:

The proposal is considered to comply with relevant local and national planning policies and is therefore recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Application Permitted

Conditions:

2 **Standard Time Condition**: The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3 **Pre-Use Condition:** Prior to the first use or operation of the air source heat pumps hereby approved, the necessary noise mitigations shall be installed in accordance with the approved plans (0106-MASTA-DR-A-0504 and 0106-MASTA-DR-A-0505) and mitigations as per section 7.6 of the submitted Plan Sound Assessment Report (1293/PSA1). The mitigations shall be maintained thereafter unless otherwise agreed to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of neighbouring amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

4 **Regulatory Condition**: The materials of the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

NOTE TO APPLICANT
The applicant is advised that in order to minimise the potential for future noise complaints the hereby permitted air conditioning units should be maintained in good working order by having a clear servicing and maintenance programme.

POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT
Statement pursuant to Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, in order to be able to, where possible, grant permission.

Plans list for: DC/24/1846
Schedule of plans/documents **approved**:

Plan Type	**Description**	**Drawing Number**	**Received Date**
Elevation plan	Existing Plans	0106-MASTA-DR-A-0500	28.11.2024
Elevation plan	Existing Plans	0106-MASTA-DR-A-0501 REV A	09.12.2024
Elevation plan	Existing Plans	0106-MASTA-DR-A-0502	28.11.2024
Elevation plan	Proposed Plans	0106-MASTA-DR-A-0503 REV C	18.02.2025
Elevation plan	Proposed Plans	0106-MASTA-DR-A-0504 REV C	18.02.2025
Elevation plan	Proposed Plans	0106-MASTA-DR-A-0505 REV B	18.02.2025
Location plan		0106-MASTA-DR-A-0200	18.02.2025
Block plan	Existing and Proposed	0106-MASTA-A-0201 REV A	18.02.2025
Supporting Docs	Sound Assessment Report	1293/PSA1	28.11.2024
Supporting Docs	Heritage Statement	NONE	28.11.2024
Supporting Docs	Nero Energy Report	NONE	28.11.2024
Supporting Docs	Sound Assessment Report	1293/PSA1 Rev.1	17.02.2025

DELEGATED

Case Officer sign/initial Steve Astles Date: 19.02.2025

Authorising Officer sign/initial RHERMITAGE Date: 24.02.2025